



Charles County Public Schools

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Gale-Bailey students learn leadership through character workshop

A group of 30 third- and fourth-grade students at Gale-Bailey Elementary School are preparing themselves for a bright and successful future, one community-based project at a time. These students participated in the Leaders for the Future workshop, held the week of Nov. 2 at the school, which focuses on student development of innate leadership skills and positive character traits.

The two-day workshop was presented by John Jay Bonstingl, founder of Bonstingl Leadership Development, and students were separated into teams to work together on creating school-based community projects to better school climate and atmosphere. Through the project, students learned to work together as team, developed leadership skills and character traits, learned what their strengths were and used problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

Gale-Bailey Principal Carrie Richardson said the goal of the workshop is to help students recognize positive character skills and work together to realize their leadership potential. "We selected a good group of students to participate. These are students that don't always necessarily volunteer to serve as leaders that need a gentle push to come out of their shells," she said.

Each of the six groups selected a different project of focus. One student team concentrated on how to provide more games for students at recess. Another team researched what it would take for the school to host a community cleanup. All teams were given an opportunity to present their projects to Richardson, who would ultimately decide which project would best benefit the school overall; however, each project will be introduced to all students for participation.

"The goal is for these students to serve as leaders for their peers and model good character traits for others," Richardson said. Students were also asked to create a weekly leader log in which they select a positive character trait to demonstrate, which will also be implemented schoolwide.

A grant from State Farm Insurance provided funding for the workshop at Gale-Bailey, and for an additional three schools in Calvert and St. Mary's counties. Additionally, Reaching Out Now, a Southern Maryland non-profit organization that serves children in Charles County, donated all of the workshop supplies.

For more information on educational programs offered by Bonstingl Leadership Development, visit www.bonstingl.com.

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